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ABSTRACT

A Jungian psychoanalytic approach, using the unconscious animus/anima archetype, can explain the appeal of the romance novel to women readers through an understanding of how the romance formula fulfills the psychological needs of contemporary women as the struggle for identity in a patriarchal society. The heroine of the romance is attracted to the hero because he is a projection of her animus spirit. The heroine's character remains stable throughout the plot; she is strong and resourceful. The hero, however, is initially cruel and abusive, but is later transformed into a caring individual. This characterization satisfies women readers' need to face their masculine side, or animus. The narrative structure of romance novels almost always includes an angry initial encounter between the hero and the heroine, a series of misunderstandings that comprise the bulk of the plot, and a happy ending. Throughout the misunderstandings, the psychological merging of the animus/hero to the ideal woman figure is accomplished, and with the transformation of the hero, the reader completes another step in her self-actualization. The happy ending constitutes the merger of the unconscious contra-sexual tendency, bringing the reader to a full understanding of her self-identity. (SRT)

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UNDERSTANDING THE "GUIDEBOOKS" TO WRITING ROMANCE FICTION AS REINFORCEMENT OF SELF THROUGH THE "FORMULA" MODEL

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UNDERSTANDING THE "GUIDEBOOKS" TO WRITING ROMANCE FICTION
AS REINFORCEMENT OF SELF THROUGH THE "FORMULA" MODEL

ABSTRACT:

Utilizing Jung's unconscious archetype of animus/anima, this study proposes a psychoanalytic perspective toward understanding the appeal of the romance novel for today's woman. This paper will describe the characteristics of the hero and heroine as psychological "figures" and then investigate the romance "formula," or the narrative structure and unique sequencing of events found in the ideal romance text, noting the importance of the initial, angry encounter, the sustained misunderstandings, or false signifieds, and finally the point of plot reconciliation as the psychological facing and merging of contra-sexual tendencies in the woman reader.

UNDERSTANDING THE "GUIDEBOOKS" TO WRITING FORMULA FICTION
AS REINFORCEMENT OF SELF THROUGH THE "FORMULA" MODEL

Many social and literary critics alike have attempted to explain why women readers are attracted to the romance novel. Some cursory explanations offered by many critics should be noted to illustrate attempts at explaining their appeal. Explanations for the current popularity of the romance novel (depending on the background and interest of the critic)range from needs for male domination to needs for cheap entertainment. Mussell (1981) summarizes those critics who view romance-reading as feminine defeat: "heroines give up spunk and character when they win/marry the hero who is still the voice of authority;" "stories are simple solutions to complex problems;" "matriarchal duties are stressed and measured by patriarchy;" "no adequate models of women are presented in this 'pop' art or in 'high' art;" "stories are unreal and unsatisfying because they all tell the same story." (p. 22) Mussell also quotes Helen Hazen, author of Endless Rapture, as expressing an attack frequently aimed at feminists, " a woman yearns to be dominated by a sexually potent man and this urge arises naturally from biological imperatives." (p. 22) Margaret Ann Jensen (1984), in her thorough study of Harlequins, Love's Sweet Return/The Harlequin Story, quotes Tania Modleski's reading of Harlequins, "romances stress 'the cost of revolt' for women and portray the heroines betraying themselves, subverting their emotions. This makes the process of reading romances a destructive act in the long run." (p. 24) Another reading is as pornography, and critics

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use this perspective to treat romances with mild disapproval or total opposition. (Jensen, 1984, p. 25)

Opposing these negative, masochistic motives are two studies which attempt to explain the appeal through more positive reasoning and through recognition of our patriarchal society. Jensen (1984) supports this more sympathetic stance, "Women read formula fiction to meet their needs for cheap entertainment, sociability, easy education and predictable plots that allow one to be interrupted without losing track of the story." (p. 515) Jensen offers more explanations:

> Since women's relationships with men are a disturbing mixture of fear and attractions, love and hate, it is not surprising that these tensions surface in their literature. ...Harlequins build this tension and then relieve it with the fantasy that love will tame the brute...Readers are drawn to this emotionally powerful combination of reality and fantasy.
>
> (pp. 154-155)

Jensen's study is representative of a recent trend of culture theorists who, instead of dismissing romance novels as "depressing stories of female subjugation," look for more accurate, sympathetic explanations. Although many literary critics have claimed these texts reveal women are weak and need a man, Jensen very perceptively questions why women readers would be drawn to a literature which reinforces their impotent status, "If Harlequins are read as feminine defeats in which heroines abdicate responsibility for themselves to the nearest powerful male, extensive explanations are needed to tell us why so many women want to read about submission and defeat." (my emphasis) (Jensen, 1984, p. 151)

Radway (1984, b) also concludes that the woman reader views the stories as "a woman's triumph." Radway, in her recent investigations has also attempted a genuine explanation of the romance novel's influence. (Radway, 1984a;1984 b, p. 54). Radway's reader-response approach led her to survey a group of women readers, the Smithton Readers, and conclude that the power of the romance novel is its ability to fulfill the reader's need for nurturance which she is unable to realize in our patriarchal society:

> We will discover that it is the constant impulse and duty to mother others that is responsible for the sense of depletion that apparently sends some women to romance fiction. By immersing themselves in the romantic fantasy, women vicariously fulfill their needs for nurturance by identifying with a heroine whose principal accomplishment, if it can even be called that, is her success at drawing the hero's attention to herself, at establishing herself as the object of his concern and recipient of his care. Because the reader experiences that care vicariously, her need is assuaged only as long as she can displace it onto a fictional character.
>
> (1984 b, p. 84)

The diversity, even contradictions, between all the negative and positive explanations can point up the advantage of examining the texts using a psychoanalytic method. For, a psychoanalytic approach, which measures in all kinds of romance novels the consistencies in character and plot structure, can give us a fundamental explanation for the romance novel's basic appeal. A psychoanalytic approach looks to unconscious forces which are projected onto the text; in other words, the discursive level embodies, in character traits and narrative structure, the deeper, unconscious motivations.

Even though today's romance novels vary from the shorter, easy-to-read Harlequins, to the longer, historical romances, to the most recent introduction, the blatantly erotic, almost pornographic romances, the notion of the heroine --and the woman reader who vicariously shares in adventures of the heroine--finding her "self" or true potential is a fundamental code found in popular romances. The theme of self-identity or self-love, initiated by such great novelists as Jane Austen and given its varied treatment by writers throughout the history of women's fiction, has remained a consistent and important signature in the development of what is today, the popular romance novel. (Keener, 1983; Paris, 1978; Radway 1984 b; Jensen, 1984; Pearson, 1981) Given that the theme of women's self-identity has remained a fundamental and consistent thread woven into the very narrative structure of the romance novel, understanding the recent explosion in the popularity of this popular fiction calls for a re-examination of this self-identity code. We need to ask if the recent (within the last decade or so) romance novel "phenomenon" indicates a reworking of this code; in other words, does the representation of self-identity in today's romances "work" in a different way for today's reader of formula fiction.

In order to investigate how the woman reader "constructs" [1] her self-identity from the reading of the romance text, I will examine characteristics and consistencies found in the "formula" which governs today's popular, romance novel. Using a psychoanalytic approach, incorporating the tenets of Jung as to the existence of contra-sexual tendencies present in all humans (anima in men, animus in women), this paper will describe

the characteristics of the hero and heroine as psychological "figures" and then investigate the romance "formula," or the narrative structure and unique sequencing of events found in the ideal romance text, noting the importance of the initial, angry encounter, the sustained misunderstandings, or false signifieds, and finally the point of plot reconciliation as the psychological facing and merging of contra-sexual tendencies in the woman reader.

The advantage of examining texts using psychoanalytic methodology is that the psychological approach can measure in all kinds of romance novels the consistencies in characterization and plot structure and can give us a fundamental explanation for the romance novel's basic appeal. A psychoanalytic approach looks to unconscious forces which are projected onto the text; in other words, the discursive level embodies, in character traits and narrative structure, the deeper, unconscious motivations. A "Jungian" reading especially, utilizing the animus/anima archetype, gives insight into the appeal of the discursive meanings of the romance novel for the woman reader through an understanding of how the romance formula fulfills psychological needs of today's woman as she struggles for identity in a patriarchal society.

Jungian critic Esther Harding (1937) details the psychological conflict present within the human psyche:

> For no individual is entirely male or entirely female. Each is made up of a composite of both elements, and these two constituents are not infrequently in constant conflict

> within the psyche...The [woman or man's] inner conflict will only be resolved when s/he has found a relation to both aspects of herself/himself and is reconciled with those ruling powers of the psyche, the masculine and feminine principles, which are inherent in the very nature of every individual.
>
> (p. 37)

Although Harding (1933) is proposing that this animus projection must occur in a woman's social interactions, this projection is, in effect, able to be achieved by the female reader as she reads and experiences the romance novel. Even though Harding's words are meant to apply to social relationships, I would argue that the unconscious transference typifies how the romance reader "constructs" the hero and heroine:

> She projects onto him [hero] some important element from her unconscious and then is attracted, or repelled, by that which she sees in him, quite unaware that it has originated deep within her own psyche. It is her masculine soul, her animus, which she has projected...her animus projected to the outside world draws her irresistably...From her subjective point of view, it seems to her that she is attracted from without, while in reality the thing which attracts her is from within--in her unconscious.
>
> (p. 41)

Her attraction to the heroine becomes her identification with the ideal woman--which would be a woman who possesses traits desirable for competition in today's patriarchal society. Lowery's How to Write Romance Novels That Sell (1983), a handbook/guide for how to write a romance novel, describes universal characteristics required of the typical heroine: "Despite her defenselessness, the heroine has an indomitable spirit...The heroine is always spunky. Events that would leave the rest of us limp never cause her to be sorry for herself. This nonsentimental, direct approach to life is appealing to the reader. No matter how weak the heroine may appear on the

surface, underneath she is persevering and courageous." (p. 28) Another guidebook Writing Romance Fiction for Love and Money (1983) says, "The heroine must be believable as a woman of the 1980's, one who can solve her own problems, one who is attempting to find a satisfying life." (Burack, 1983, pp. 81-82) Jensen (1984) agrees that "This spirited strength is portrayed to be an inherent part of the heroine's character, an aspect that cannot be taken away from her by adversity, prosperity, or even by love. (p. 123)

Her attraction to the hero becomes the projection of her animus spirit. It is crucial to this study to note in analyzing the hero that, unlike the heroine whose resolve and independence are characteristics she possesses throughout her life, the hero is initially harsh and uncaring, but in the process of the story, he is transformed into a warm, nurturing individual. One explanation for the appearance of harsh, impatient heroes certainly must be that the hero has to match the recent trend in "spunky" and "feisty" heroines. Jensen (1984) recognizes the trend of the 1980's romance novel, "Flamboyant heroes are paired with tempermental, spirited heroines. When the heroines began to change into stronger characters, the heroes had to change as well. As one reader pointed out to me, strong-willed women intimidate most men. To make the story believable, heroes had to at least match the heroines in strength." (p. 90)

This explanation of why the traits of the heroine and hero have changed represents largely a "surface" interpretation, however. My argument for a deeper, Jungian reading can make sense of the discursive characterizations. The "strengthening" and "intensifying" that heroes and heroines have undergone

can be explained by the current women's movement which has called attention to our patriarchal society and the unequal treatment women endure today. The current questioning of a woman's place in our patriarchal society and the consequent need for women to find their identity within the workplace and within the home can more accurately explain why the heroines have become stronger and more independent and why the heroes have been likewise created to match them.

The ideal romance succeeds, therefore, because differences between the two prime actors are carefully drawn at the outset and always the same--a spunky heroine who is resourceful throughout and an initially cruel hero who is transformed into a caring individual. The stability of the heroine is understood as the ideal woman figure and contrasts with the hero who, as the animus projections, changes from brutal to caring--as he is "faced" and then assimilated to the female function at the point of "happy ending" in the romance novel.

Understanding the unconscious motivations embodied in the romance heroine and hero can help us appreciate the power of the romance "formula." Along with the proof of popularity of the romance novel in sheer numbers--500 million copies annually in the next few years--(Burack, 1983, p. vii) another phenomenon which has escaped the notice of the critics and which testifies to the increased readership has been the recent publication of many guidebooks to the writing of a romance novel. Publishers and successful romance novelists have, in response to the demand for popular romance novels, begun publishing guidebooks, citing the rules to follow in the writing of successful, "publishable" romance novels and including numerous tips needed for the prospective novelist to incorporate.

No doubt the writers who pattern their narratives on the "correct" romance formula, do not consider what hidden psychological releases are accomplished through the creation of their textual "symbols." But we have the curious phenomenon in romance publishing that, in response to the millions of paperback romance novels that are purchased annually, publishers are so in need of texts to fulfill the need that they are publishing both book-length manuals on how to write the ideal romance and sending to any prospective writer who requests them, editorial guidelines, or "tip sheets," on how to follow the correct romance "formula" for their respective series or "lines."

The romance novel publishers, recognizing this vast market of women readers, have introduced not only one kind of romance novel but have introduced different "lines" of romances which can appeal to every woman's taste in length, amount of sexuality, locale, and even career-choice of the heroine, which is portrayed in the respective series. For example, Ron Busch, president of Pocket Books, states that because the mid-70's signaled a major shift toward sexuality through the "bigger and better novels" of Danielle Steele, Rosemary Rogers, and Kathleen Woodiwiss, his company launched, in May 1980, the "Silhouette Romances" line, which has subsequently been followed by the "Silhouette Special Edition," "Silhouette Desire," and "First Love" lines. Busch notes that marketing research through direct marketing, newsletters, and writers' workshops demonstrated that many readers were no longer interested in gothic romances or the "conservative" romance novel with its unthreatening, "sexually-safe" undertones, and so,

the publishing companies accommodated this interest of women who thought they could write romance novels (Many guidebooks tell of women who, after reading dozens of romances suddenly realize that they could do better than what they were reading. It is also interesting to note that the average royalty in the successful publishing of one romance can be $20,000 to $30,000, an obvious incentive for any avid reader/writer to attempt!) by providing both the guidebooks to do so and the tip sheets and the separate lines to accommodate this interest. One such publishing house to do this is the well-known Harlequin Books, who began with "Harlequin Romance" line, and have since added "Harlequin Presents," "Harlequin Gothic Romances," "Harlequin Regency Romances," "Harlequin Temptation," "Harlequin American Romance," "Harlequin Romantic Intrigue," and "Harlequin Superromance," each requiring a particular amount of sexual explicitness, locale (exotic, American, European),requirements of the heroine, requirements of the hero, length of manuscript, and degree of development of plot/subplots.

Nevertheless, no matter how the manuals may specify originality and freshness in plot ideas, the romance formula, or narrative structure, can vary little. A look at some suggested outlines of the narrative structure of the ideal romance novel can demonstrate the remarkable similar plot structure. (See next page.)

A glance at these three samples demonstrates that the angry or conflict-filled initial encounter, the string of misunderstandings which comprise the body of the narrative structive, and the happy ending are always present. These necessary components of the "formula" demonstrate the consistency of the psychological, deeper motivations embodied in the discursive narrative structure. In other words, the formula is so consistent and successful

K. Falk. How to Write a Romance and Get It Published	M.M. Lowery. How to Write Romance Novels That Sell	J. Radway. Reading the Romance
INITIAL ENCOUNTER		
1. Woman meets devastating man, sparks fly. 2. Motivation for their attachment is established, along with a conflict.	1. A girl, our heroine, meets a man, our hero, who is above her socially and who is wealthy and worldly. 2. The hero excites the heroine but frightens her sexually. 3. She is usually alone in the world and vulnerable.	1. The heroine's social identity is destroyed. 2. The heroine reacts antagonistically to an aristocratic male. 3. The aristocratic male responds ambiguously to the heroine.
MISUNDERSTANDINGS, FALSE SIGNIFIEDS		
3. They are torn apart. 4. They are drawn back to each other. (Steps 3 and 4 may be repeated.)	4. The hero dominates the heroine, but she is fiery and sensual. 5. Though appearing to scorn her, the hero is intrigued by her and pursues her sexually. 6. The heroine wants love, not merely sex, and sees his pursuit as self-gratification. 7. The two clash in verbal sparring. 8. In holding to her own standards, the heroine appears to lose the hero. She does not know he respects her. 9. A moment of danger for either main character results in the realization on the part of the hero or heroine that the feeling between them is true love. 10. A last-minute plot twist threatens their relationship.	4. The heroine interprets the hero's behavior as evidence of a purely sexual interest in her. 5. The heroine responds to the hero's behavior with anger or coldness. 6. The hero retaliates by punishing the heroine. 7. The heroine and hero are physically and/or emotionally separated. 8. The hero treats the heroine tenderly. 9. The heroine responds warmly to the hero's act of tenderness. 10. The heroine reinterprets the hero's ambiguous behavior as the product of previous hurt.
HAPPY ENDING		
5. They reconcile their problems. 6. They commit themselves to marraige.	11. The two finally communicate and admit their true love, which will last forever.	11. The hero proposes/openly declares his love for/demonstrates his unwavering commitment to the heroine with a supreme act of kindness. 12. The heroine responds sexually and emotionally. 13. The heroine's identity is restored.

because it "works" for the woman reader. The surface elements accommodate the psychological needs of the woman of today, in the psychological meeting of her animus figure which helps her create a whole sense of self as she struggles to find herself in a patriarchal, demanding society.

While some would argue that, indeed, any fiction narrative includes an initial encounter to spark conflict which leads to the inevitable complications until plot reconciliation occurs, a look at the romance novel formula illuminates its distinctive requirements. It is required of the romance novel that the initial encounter of heroine to hero is filled with the heroine's distrust and suspicions of the hero. Often included in this first meeting is even physical brutality of the hero to heroine. From The Flame and the Flower, we have a description of the hero's "darkness" and brutality, "He had the look of a pirate about him, or even Satan himself, with his dark, curly hair and long sideburns that accentuated the lean, handsome features of his face." (p. 31) And in his first meeting with the heroine, his cruelty and ruthlessness are described as he mistakes Heather for a prostitute and proceeds to rape her, "Almost immediately he was on top of her, pinning down her writhing body, and it seemed that every move she made only abetted his intent...'No!' she gasped, 'Leave me alone! Let me be!' He chuckled and murmered against her throat. 'Oh, no, my bloodthirsty little wench. Oh no, not now.'" (p. 33) In the Harlequin Romance A Time of Deception (1985) the hero, a "domineering, pigheated brute," meets the heroine for the first time: "His arm lashed out and she felt hard fingers digging cruelly into her wrist. 'When I first saw you sitting in my father's office, I vowed I would have you.'" (Badger, 1985, p. 34)

These excerpts are typical of how heroes, at the beginning of the novels, are portrayed as abusive, domineering characters.

Tip sheets provided by Harlequin Books for their various lines reinforce the required characteristics of the heroine and hero. Although tip sheets do not spell out firm guidelines, nevertheless, the publishers can probably assume that any prospective romance writer is already a romance "fan" and therefore has read enough romance novels to be familiar with their simple formula. Some characteristics of heroine should be: "She has a strong sense of her own individuality and an unshakable resolve to survive and be happy no matter what the obstacles;" (Harlequin Temptation) "In her career, she should be assertive and goal-oriented;" (Harlequin American Romance) "She is generally in her mid-to-late-twenties, with a fairly clear idea of who she is as an individual and of her own self-worth. Thus, due to her intelligence, maturity and gutsiness, she can certainly stand up for herself." (Harlequin Superromance) In turn, the hero must be: "He should appear as if he is the villain, but with redeeming qualities that the heroine cannot help but respond to emotionally;" (Harlequin Gothic Romances) "He should be very attractive, worldly and successful in his field and, unlike the heroine, quite sexually experienced, and this fact may be implied." (Harlequin Romance)

Applying a Jungian reading to the requirements of the heroine and hero reveals that the discursive conflict represents the unconscious figures of heroine (ideal woman figure) and hero (animus figure). In fact, this psychological interpretation can answer those critics who ask why these novels necessarily contain this unmotivated mental/physical abuse toward

the heroine. I would argue that instead of the supposed "rape fantasy" or craving for male dominance (Mussell, 1981, p. 22) that many critics contend, this popular literature entertains and is satisfying to today's woman reader bacause it satisfies her need to face her animus/masculine side. The hero embodies her masculine "side" and provides the first necessary step in her quest for "self," or as noted earlier by Harding, "If [a woman] is to become an independent personality, instead of being only the feminine counterpart of a man, she must bring up to consciousness her own masculine qualities," (p. 78)

After the delineation of hero and heroine, the body of the narrative structure typically contains the interaction and conflicts between the two prime characters until they reach the happy ending, with some unique developments typical to the ideal romance, however. Suspicion and distrust, triggered by the initial "conflict-encounter," is sustained because the inner dialogue of each character is constantly assigning false signifieds to the other's actions. (Radway, 1984 b, p. 65) Lack of honest communication between the two is the major obstacle to their mutual understanding. (Jensen, 1984, p. 76) In fact, in most novels the basic conflict/misunderstanding which sustains the whole plot tension could be resolved by one character saying aloud in one sentence what he/she is thinking. Howeyer, they both maintain silent signification, although because the story is told from the heroine's viewpoint, we get a steadier stream of her attributions of false signifieds than the hero's.

In the Harlequin Romance Maelstrom (1985) Samatha sees a "dark" man and later, when they "accidentally" collide in a restaurant, she thinks

he has been watching her and planning this excuse to approach her. She immediately distrusts his motives, especially when he "holds her against him for support several seconds longer than was necessary." (Cooper, 1985, p. 15) She thinks, "She had met his type before--and how! They thought they were God's gift to women...there was a dangerous light in his eyes that spoke of more than anger." (pp. 15-16) Later in the story, having become romantically involved, while sharing an intimate sunset, he is interrupted by a phone call from a woman and then seems upset; to this simple action, she assigns his complete rejection of her. (p. 108) Only at the very end, are their real feelings exposed.

Throughout, the hero and heroine are shown to despise each other overtly, even though they are "in love," primarily because each is jealous or suspicious of the other's motives and consequently fails to trust the other. (Radway, 1985 b, p. 65) During this middle section of the narrative, therefore, the psychological merging of animus/hero to the ideal woman figure is accomplished, represented at the discurseive level by the transformation of the hero from uncaring, even abusive, to gentle and nurturant by the end. At the deep, unconscious level, we find that the misunderstandings and false signifieds which characterize the plot conflict of a romance represent the facing and merging process of the woman reader's animus figure. In the transformation of the hero, today's reader enjoys another step in her quest for self.

The happy ending which is an absolute necessity for the ideal romance novel and is the crucial part of the narrative formula signifying the point

of psychological merger of the unconscious contra-sexual tendency,finally brings the romance reader to the full appreciation of self-identity. This point of hero and heroine's final declaration of love and emotional bonding brings a woman to discover psychologically the powerful "mother" within her. The hero and heroine's surface bonding represents the psychological merging necessary for a complete sense of self. According to Harding's reading of Jung's tenets, a woman can only discover the powerful mother within her with the acceptance of her animus spirit.

> Reality can gradually be made to replace the illusion of the animus and anima projections, a process which involves psychological development and an extension of consciousness through the assimilation of that unconscious side of the psyche which previously lived in the projected animus or anima.
>
> (p. 38)

In other words, a woman facing her animus projection is able to release it from her unconscious and make it part of her conscious realm. And in so doing, she realizes her full potential as woman and "self." Pearson (1981) agrees that a woman "following her liberation from male definition" becomes ready for "reconciliation with the mother" which ultimately leads to finding self-identity, "The search for mother and the search for self are inextricably bound together (p. 197)...The hero's [woman's] reconciliation with the mother results in the act of giving birth to the whole self--a reconciliation of self-affirmation with nurturance and self with Other." (p. 199) I would argue, then that a romance reader faces the powerful animus figure within her as she "constructs" the hero of the text. By freeing herself from the animus projection as she experiences the transformation of the hero to "feminine" qualities,

then and only then, is she able to reconcile to the ideal, symbolic mother within her. As Pearson (1981) says, "Having discovered the powerful father within herself, she reconsiders her original repudiation of the mother. Her quest becomes a search for her true, powerful female parent. (p. 177)

Let me conclude by saying that for years social and literary critics alike have tried to decide the attraction of women readers to romance novels. Reasons offered range from negative interpretations such as the need for male dominance or cheap entertainment (Mussell, 1981; Jensen, 1984, p. 25) to positive explanations such as the pleasure of the reading experience (Radway, 1984 b; Mussell, 1981, p. 106) or the need for vicarious nurturance through the experience of hero and heroine interaction. (Radway a, b) The recent Harlequin study of Jensen (1984) and Radway's reader-response approach to understanding women's attraction to the romance novel both attempt real understanding of the romance novel "phenomenon" of recent years.

I would offer my psychoanalytic analysis of the romance text as a complementary approach to gaining insight into the romance novel's attraction. My focus on the power of the formula to act on the woman reader's enjoyment and pleasure in the romance text recognizes the demands of the patriarchal society and the demands of that society on today's woman.

Umberto Eco (1979 a) in The Role of the Reader explains how a "contemporary industrial society" would desire a literature of repose--of escape into literature and narrative which is predictable, "Narrative of a redundant nature would appear in this panorama as an indulgent

invitation to repose, the only occasion of true relaxation offered to the sonsumer." (p. 121) John Cawalti (1976), in Adventure, Mystery, and Romance, agrees as to the power of formuliac literature as a reprieve from reality: "Formula stories may well be one important way in which the individuals in a culture act out unconscious or repressed needs, or express latent motives that they must give expression to but cannot face openly." (p. 26) Admitting underlying, psychological motivations of the formula reader supports the focus of this study. The psychoanalytic approach to understanding the romance novel text and its function for the reader will offer another perspective for critical analysis, a perspective which can delve deeper and uncover unconscious, psychological interpretations which, in turn, can organize and make sense of the "surface" explications. So when Jensen asks "extensive explanations are needed to tell us why so many women want to read about submission and defeat," (Jensen, 1984, p. 151) and when Radway observes that the end of the narrative is more a "capitulation or surrender to uncontrollable sexuality than a triumph effected by her ability to transform him [hero] into an emotionally expressive individual," (1984 b, p. 171) I would answer that the psychological understanding of the romance formula as "release" for unconsciously-felt needs and motivations can explain the attraction as a woman's quest for self-identity.

NOTES

[1]By "construct" I mean the notion that a reader, in his/her reading of the text, not only understands the discursive, "objective" events being presented but attaches to the "textual events" other meanings which he/she brings to the text from all previous experiences. In other words, the notion of "construct" puts the "job" of interpretation on the reader.

[2]"Sweet Bondage: You and Your Romance Habit." Ms, Feb 1983, p. 97.

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